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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/723,794	11/26/2003	Yu-Chang Jong	252011-1790	9066
47390	7590	01/25/2005	EXAMINER	
THOMAS, KAYDEN, HOSTEMEYER & RISLEY LLP 100 GALLERIA PARKWAY SUITE 1750 ATLANTA, GA 30339			DANG, TRUNG Q	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2823	

DATE MAILED: 01/25/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/723,794

Applicant(s)

JONG ET AL.

Examiner

Trung Dang

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 06 December 2004.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-31 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-31 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 26 November 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Furuhashi et al. of record in view of Abeln et al. (US 6,207,510).

With reference to Figs. 6-13 and the description thereof, the reference teaches substantially the claimed invention in that it discloses a method of forming an integrated circuit having gate oxide layers with multiple thicknesses, comprising the steps of:

providing a substrate having a first active region **3000**, a second active region **2000**, and a third active region **1000**;

performing a first oxidation to form a first oxide layer **50aL** on the substrate (Fig. 6);

depositing a blanket high temperature oxide layer (HTO) **50bL** with a first thickness (100–200 Å) overlying the substrate (Fig. 7);

forming a first photoresist layer **R3** on the high temperature oxide layer except over the second active region **2000**;

etching the high temperature oxide layer and the underlying first oxide layer on the second active region using the first photoresist layer as an etch mask to expose the substrate (Fig. 8);

removing the first photoresist layer;

performing a second oxidation to form a second oxide layer **22aL** with a second thickness (30-150 Å) less than the first thickness on the second active region **2000** (Fig. 9);

forming a second photoresist layer **R5** overlying the substrate except over the third active region **1000**;

removing the high temperature oxide layer and the underlying first oxide layer on the third active region to expose the substrate (Fig. 11);

removing the second photoresist layer;

performing a third oxidation to form a third oxide layer **20L** with a third thickness (10 - 100 Å) less than the first thickness on the third active region and on the second oxide layer on the second active region (Fig. 12); and

forming a first gate **34** on the high temperature oxide layer on the first active region, a second gate **32** on the second oxide layer on the second active region, and a third gate **30** on the third thermal oxide layer on the third active region (Fig. 13).

Furuhata differs from the amended independent claims 1, 14 and 26 in that while Furuhata shows in Fig. 7 a non-planar high temperature oxide (HTO) layer

50bL as a result of depositing the HTO layer **50bL** on a substrate having the field insulation **18** formed by local oxidation of silicon (LOCOS), the claims call for a corresponding HTO layer having a substantially planar top surface.

However, in the same field of endeavor, Abeln teaches that device isolation regions can be formed by shallow trench isolation (STI) method to produce a substantially planar surface or by alternative methods including LOCOS (Fig. 2 and col. 4, lines 22-40).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the primary reference by forming the field insulation **18** by STI method so as to produce substantially planar surface as suggested by Abeln because both STI and LOCOS are recognized in the art as alternatives in the making of device isolation, and the substitution of one technique for another art-recognized technique to make the same would have been within the level of one skilled in the art, absent a showing of criticality or unexpected result by applicants. Note that the HTO layer **50bL** when deposited on a substrate in which active regions are isolated by STI would result in having a substantially planar top surface as claimed.

For claim 3, see col. 8, lines 24-28 for the transistor **100** (corresponding to the claimed third device region) that is operated at a first voltage level (1.8- 3.3V (col.4, lines 5-6) is a core device region such as sense amplifier.

For claims 7 and 8, see col.8, lines 29-37 and col. 4, lines 6-12 for transistors **200** and **300**, which correspond to the claimed second and first devices, respectively.

As for the value of the first thickness recited in claims 11 and 28, although Furuhata teaches the HTO layer **50bL** having a first thickness in a range of 100-200 Å as noted above, the difference in thickness will not support the patentability of the subject matter encompassed by the prior art unless there is evidence indicating such thickness is critical. “[W]here the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, it is not inventive to discover the optimum or workable range by routine experimentation.” See *In re Aller*, 220 F.2d 454, 456, 105 USPQ 233, 235 (CCPA 1955); *In re Hoeschele*, 406 F.2d 1403, 160 USPQ 809 (CCPA 1969); *Merck & Co. Inc. v. Biocraft Laboratories Inc.*, 874 F.2d 804, 10 USPQ2d (Fed.cir), cert. denied, 493 U.S. 975 (1989); *In re Kulling*, 897 F.2d 1147, 14 USPQ2d 1056 (Fed. Cir. 1990); and *In re Geisler*, 116 F.3d 1465, 43 USPQ2d 1362 (Fed. Cir. 1997). Furthermore, the specification contains no disclosure of either the critical nature of the claimed thickness range or any unexpected results arising therefrom. Where patentability is said to be based upon particular chosen dimensions or upon another variable recited in the claim, the applicant must show that the chosen dimensions are critical. *In re Woodruff*, 919 F.2d, 1575, 1578, 16 USPQ2d, 1936 (Fed. Cir. 1990).

Response to Arguments

2. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1, 14, and 26 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

3. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

4. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Trung Dang whose telephone number is 571-272-1857. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Friday 9:30am-6:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Olik Chaudhuri can be reached on 571-272-1855. The fax

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phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Trung Dang
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 2823

01/19/05

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Trung Dang', is written over the printed name and title.